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# INCREDIBLE

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BY THE  
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AUTHORITY

# SCIENCE FICTION



OBJECTIONABLE 1950s EC COMICS!



**INCREDIBLE**



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CANADA

# SCIENCE FICTION



# YOU ROCKET

THE SHIP IS YOU AND YOU ARE THE SHIP. YOUR SKIN IS AN ALLOY HARDER THAN DIAMOND. YOUR SKELETON IS BURL. STEEL. YOUR MUSCLES ARE TENSILE STAINLESS. YOUR FOOD IS RADICAL LIVERWY. YOU BARK THROUGH PHOTO-ELECTRIC EYES. YOU HEAR THROUGH SONIC VIBRATIONS. YOU LISTEN TO THE TINK, CHAWLING THINGS BELOW... AND YOU MARVEL. YOU MARVEL THAT SUCH CREATURES CREATED YOU. YOU WHAT HAVE YOU TO DO WITH THEM? THEY ARE BUT MEN. WHILE YOU... TOMORRE A ROCKET. AND IT IS THINLY INSULATED TO ZERO.

THE VOICE BELOW CHIRPED ON AND ON... DEEP WITHIN YOUR SLICK METAL BARK YOUR BLOOD THAT WAS ONCE BURNING LIVED... BUT YOU FEEL ONLY COLD, ALLOP. AMUSEMENT...

AT THIS TIME, IT IS FITTING THAT WE PAY TRIBUTE TO THOSE WHO WENT BEFORE... TO THE MEN WHO FLEW OUR FIRST ROCKETS... TO THOSE WHO GAVE THEM ALL.



... THUS, TODAY, WE STAND ONCE MORE UPON THE THRESHOLD. TODAY, MAN REACHED AGAIN FOR THE STARS. KNOWING THAT THIS TIME, HE SHALL NOT FAIL.



THOUGH THEY ARE DEAD, WE OWE THEM MUCH. LET US THEREFORE BOW OUR HEADS IN SILENT PRAYER.



YOU LISTEN TO THOSE PURT HUMMING FIB BLOW YOU, SPIN-  
ING THEIR CONTINENTAL DRIVE, AND YOU'RE AS GOOD AS  
NOT ONE OF THEM. YOU'RE GRATEFUL FOR THAT ACCIDENT  
55 YEARS AGO. YOU CAN STILL REMEMBER... VAGUELY...  
THE ROCKET CAR, WHIPPING NORTH TO THE PROVING  
GROUND...



YOUR ROCKET CAR HAD SKIDDED,  
SWERVED, DRAG WILD-FLAME'S SAVED  
THE DRIVE, AND YOU NEVER SAW THE  
MEN IN THEIR WHITE LAB COATS POUR  
FROM THE NEAREST BUILDING, RACE TO  
THE WRECK...



THERE'S A BUT  
IN THERE!  
IT'S ALLAN CRANE! HE'S  
A ROCKET  
ENGINEER UP  
AT THE PROVING  
GROUND!

LET'S GET  
HIM  
INSIDE  
QUICKLY!

YOU NEVER SAW THEM TAKE YOU  
INSIDE... LET YOU OPEN THE DOOR  
TABLE WITHIN THE LABORATORY.  
YOU NEVER SAW THE CONTAINERS  
AROUND THE WALLS... WITH THEIR  
VARIOUS-SIZED SPECIMENS...



HOW IS HE?

HE... HE'S  
BREATH!

YOU'D BEEN A SCIENTIST. YOU'D WORKED WITH THOSE PURT  
HUMMING ON THEIR FIRST FEETLE ATTEMPTS TO CRASHIN SPACE,  
AND YOU'D WITNESSED THEIR FAILURE. YOU NEVER SAW THE  
DIS- SLIDE ON THE DRIVE...



YOU NEVER HEARD THE PAIR, AND  
THEN THE EJECTED VOICE OF ONE OF  
THE MEN...



THERE'S STILL FOUR... IF HE  
BOSS FAST! WE CAN STILL DO  
IT! IT'S... IT'S TOO GOOD A  
CHANCE TO WASTE!

YOU'D SEEN ALLAN CRANE. YOU'D CRASH IN A ROCKET  
CAR ACCIDENT. YOU WERE COME FROM THIS EARTH  
AND HUMAN BEING. AND YET, THESE MEN WORKED UPON  
YOU...



START THE PUMPS! READY WITH THE ELECTRO-  
ENERGIZER! IT'S COMING OUT...

HOW COULD YOU KNOW THAT THERE'D BEEN WORKING WITH  
ANIMALS? HOW COULD YOU KNOW THAT, BY YOUR DEATH  
IN AN ACCIDENT SO NEAR THEIR LABORATORY, YOU'D WOULD  
BE THEIR FIRST HUMAN SPECIMENT? YOU NEVER SAW...  
NEVER HEARD...



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

I... I THINK WE'VE  
DONE IT. I THINK  
WE'VE SUCCEEDED.

HOW COULD YOU UNDERSTAND, AT FIRST, HOW COULD YOU KNOW WHAT THEY'D DONE TO YOU? THEY'D WIPED YOUR BRAIN CLEAN, BACK TO ITS EARLIEST RECOLLECTIONS, SO THAT YOU WOULD NOT GO MAD...

THEY'D EXPLAINED IT TO YOU YEARS AFTERWARD, YOU HAD BEEN HONORED, YOU HAD BEEN CHOSEN TO FLY MAN'S FIRST SUCCESSFUL, INTERPLANETARY ROCKET...

**BRILL, DOCTOR? WHAT SHALL I REPORT?**

**YOU MAY REPORT THAT THE FIRST STEP HAS SUCCEEDED: THE BRAIN IS ALIVE... AND DISAPPALED!**

**THERE HAVE BEEN OTHER FLIGHTS, ALLAN, BUT EACH TIME, THE BRAIN WAS TOO GREAT, EACH TIME, THE FLIGHT FAILED!**

**THE MEN WHO FEARED THOSE FIRST ROCKETS STARED IN THE FACE OF INFINITE SPACE. THEY BRAGGED... SO BECAUSE OF THEM, AT THOUGHT OF USING AN ELECTRONIC BRAIN? BUT TO ASSEMBLE A ROCKET, WE'D NEED A BRAIN THAT COULD REASON! AN ELECTRONIC BRAIN CANNOT DO THIS... ONLY A HUMAN BRAIN CAN REASON! SO...**

**THEY'D EXPLAINED IT TO YOU YEARS AFTERWARD, BUT AT FIRST, YOU KNOW ONLY LONGEDNESS, FEAR, AND THAT HAD BEEN ELIMINATED... SUCCESS!...**

**TODAY, WE BEGIN YOUR EDUCATION, ALLAN, AND NOW AFRAID?**

**YES, YOUR 'FEAR'...**

**HET, PRESSEZ A BOUTON...AND THE DARKNESS WAS ALREADY IN YOU. BACK TO UNDERSTANDING...**

**YOU MUST LEARN NOW TO BE AFRAID, ALLAN! YOU MUST LEARN TO CONTROL YOUR EMOTIONS... PARAPHRASE YOUR FEELINGS! THERE IS NO ROOM FOR FEAR IN THE JOB YOU HAVE TO DO!**

**THAT'S WHY I MUST ERASE YOUR FEAR. THIS BUTTON CREATES A SENSORY RESPONSE - INSTANT JOY... BUT WILL MAKE YOU FORGET FEAR. NOW ARE YOU AFRAID, ALLAN?**

**YES, 'FEAR'...**

**NOW I NOT WAIT! 'FEAR!' NOT 'FEAR!'**

THAT'S BETTER, ALLAN! YOU SEE, WE MUST START CLEAN! WE MUST PURSUE YOUR NATURAL, SOFT-NESS... THAT EMOTIONAL WEAP-NESS! MAN MUST GO TO THE STARS! YOU MUST LEARN...

LEARN... LEARN!



SO IT HAD BEEN THE LONG YEARS, THE COLD YEARS. HIS NAME WAS NELSON. IT WAS HIS HAND WHICH HAD CONCEIVED THIS PLAN, HOW YOU'D SUFFERED... HOW YOU'D HATED HIM AT FIRST...

SO, ALLAN? NOW MERCURY IS TWENTY-ONE MILLION MILES FROM THE SUN, BUT TWENTY-ONE YOU MUST DO BETTER! THINK! CONCENTRATE!



YOU MUST ME, DON'T YOU, ALLAN? AND YET, ONE DAY, YOU WILL... GO TO THE STARS! THIS MUST BE!



THIS MUST BE! A WHOLE SCIENTIFIC WORLD HAD SHED IT AND THE PLAN WENT ON... JUST SO MUCH DREAM... JUST SO MUCH TEACHING... JUST SO MUCH SUGGESTION...



BUT NELSON HAD LIVED. IT HADN'T BEEN LONG. A FEW DAYS LATER, WHEN HIS COME AND CARRIED YOU TO ANOTHER PLACE. AND WHEN, BEFORE, THERE HAD BEEN A COOKIN' PLATONUM WHEED LEADING FROM YOU... NOW THERE WERE HUNDREDS... THOUSANDS...



THIS IS A DUPLICATE OF THE CONTROL PANEL OF THE ROCKET YOU WILL FLY, ALLAN! YOU MUST LEARN IT... WELL!

IN THE END, THE PLAN HAD SUCCEEDED. IT HAD TO SUC-CEED. IN THE END, YOU HAD EVEN BEGUN TO WONDER HOW IT WOULD FEEL TO BE FREE. WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE TO BE OUT THERE... IN SPACE... IN THE INFINITE VOID...



NELSON, NOW LONG? HOW MUCH MUST I LEARN BEFORE I AM READY? I WANT TO GO OUT THERE... WHERE THE STARS ARE SO BEAUTIFUL!

SOON! THEN IT WILL BE SOON, ALLAN, VERY SOON!

A NEW PHASE OF YOUR EDUCATION HAD BEGUN. DAY AFTER DAY, YOU WERE TAUGHT FLIGHT PROCEDURES, NAVIGATION, COURSE-CONTROL, EMERGENCY ACTION.



METEOR! ALEXANDER IN 1 LATITUDE 890!

OVER AND OVER... TEST... TEST... PRACTISE...

EXCELLENT! EXCELLENT! YOUR RESPONSE WAS ALMOST PERFECT! HAD THAT BEEN A FINAL TEST, YOU WOULD HAVE PASSED IT! GOOD! NOW, LET'S GO ON...



IT WAS WILSON WHO FIRST SAID IT. YOU WEREN'T BUILT FOR ANY OTHER. MAN HAD SUCCEEDED. MAN HAD MADE YOU MORE HUMAN. AND THEN ONE DAY, IN YOUR ELEVENTH YEAR, YOU WERE READY.



YOU'D COME TO KNOW YOUR OWN POWER. THEN, YOU'D SLIDED IN IT. ...

AND THEN YOU WERE HERE! YOUR STAFF, TECHNICIANS, AND FRIENDS! YOU'D COME! WHEN DO I LEAVE?



AND IT SPENT ON, ON AND ON, THE TRAINING, THE PRACTICAL, AND WITH THE KNOWLEDGE CAME THE TRUTH. THAT YOU WERE ABOVE THESE FLUNT HUMANS WHO HAD TRAINED YOU. WHAT WAS COULD DO, YOU COULD DO... ONLY FASTER... BETTER... MORE ACCURATELY!



THEY'D TOLD YOU A SHIP AND MADE YOU A PART OF IT. YOU'D ONLY TO THINK, AND THE IMPULSE FIRED ALONG PLATINUM WIRES TO SHIFT A STUD, OR PULL A LEVER, OR ACTIVATE THE GRAVITY BEAMS, WHICH WOULD GUIDE YOU.



WILSON? WHERE ARE YOU? I WANT YOU!



WHAT WILL YOU DO, WILSON? USE THE MEMORY BLOCK BUTTON AGAIN? NO! AMERICA COULD DO IRREPARABLE DAMAGE TO MY BODY! I DON'T WANT THAT! I'M DAMAGED! MY BODY IS UNREPAIRABLE! WILSON!



GOOD, WILSON! LOGIC MEANS  
SUPPORTING IT'S PRACTICALLY  
POSSIBLE! YOU THOUGHT WE WERE  
BECOMING FALLOUT... BUT YOU WILL  
NOT THINK OF SUPPORTING ME, THEN?  
FOUR... I AM MASTER BOB!



WELL, WILSON,  
I ASKED YOU A  
QUESTION!



YOU... YOU TAKE OFF IN ONE  
WEEK! YOUR DESTINATION WILL  
BE MAID... IF YOU SUCCEEDED, YOU  
WILL CARRY PASSENGERS ON  
YOUR SECOND FLIGHT!

IF I SUCCEEDED I  
WILL SUCCEED! WILSON!  
I AM PERFECT! A  
MAN CAN'T FAIL! BUT  
I AM NOT A MAN! I  
AM A FOUR-ARMED  
MACHINE! BOB  
THAT, I THINK  
YOU!



A "FOUR-ARMED MACHINE" YOU'D SAID THE WORDS  
PROBABLY FOR THE FIRST ONLY A WEEK AGO... AND NOW,  
YOU SAY... CHIPPING AT THE SLOWNESS OF TIME...  
WAITING FOR ZERO HOUR...



...THINKING TIME, WE CAN'T FAIL!

YOU'VE GOT THE FRIGHTFUL LITTLE PEOPLE... THEN  
CHIPPING... THEY ASKED... BUT THEIR DREAM IS NO LONGER  
THEIR... IT'S YOURS NOW! YOU! THE MACHINE...

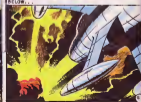


AT LAST THEY TAKE AWAY THE HYDRAULIC CORDS THAT  
SUPPORT YOU... THEY FLIE TO THEIR DEATHS... SO THAT  
YOUR BLAZING ROCKET... THERE WILL NOT BE ANY  
OUT OF THEM... YOU STAND READY... ZERO HOUR... ZERO...



THREE... TWO... ONE...

YOU THINK THE PROCEDURE YOU'VE REMEMBERED A  
MILLION TIMES BEFORE... THE ATOMIC ENGINE'S HOUR...  
YOU BELIEVED AN INSTANT... BELIEVING CLOUDS OF FLAME  
AND ROCKET EXHAUST FLOW DOWN UPON THE CONCRETE  
BELOW...



YOU SHAKY HEADSELF FIRST OF THE DUST OF EARTH AND YOU'VE BEING INTO THE NIGHT. YOUR TRAIL, A LINE OF BLUE FIRE...



YOU ARE POWER! YOU ARE MAJESTY. EARTH'S GRAVITY PULLS, EARTH HERSELF CRACKLES AND WHISPERS. YOU ARE ABOVE EARTH! ABOVE MAN? ABOVE FEAR AND FEAR!



IT LIES BEFORE YOU... INFINITY! THE ENDLESS VASTNESS OF BLACK SPACE! THIS IS YOUR LIFE! THIS IS YOUR DESTINY! THIS...



ABOVE FEAR. BUT THEN, WHY IS IT THAT AS YOU FLARE YOUR GOLDEN LEGS, EYES ON THE VASTNESS AROUND YOU, THE BLACKNESS BEGINS TO BLACK... THE VOID BEGINS TO BLO... NO, VERY BLO...

WHY IS IT THAT THE STARS ARE SUDDENLY A WHIRLING FUNNEL... SUCKING YOU UP... UP INTO NOTHINGNESS? WHY DO YOU FEEL SO ALONE? SO VERY MUCH ALONE! ONLY MAN NEEDS COMPANY!



THERE... THOSE OTHERS MUST HAVE FELT LIKE THIS! BUT THEY WERE MEN! 'PUNK MAN' YOU AREN'T A 'PUNK MAN' YOU'RE A MACHINE! YOU WANT FIGHT DOWN THE SILENT SOUL-SHILLING FEAR! YOU MUST! YOU... YOU...

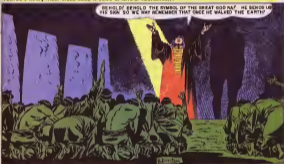
YOU TURN BACK! BECAUSE MEN ARE NOT GODS! BECAUSE YOU ARE STILL A MAN AFTER ALL! AND THEN, IN YOUR LONELINESS, MAN-LIKE, YOU CALL FOR HELP. JUST BEFORE YOU BECOME PERISHED IN MADNESS, YOU DREAM UP A FAR MORE DISTANT, SOFT MEMORY...



MAMA-A-A-A-A-A

# FULFILLMENT

PROLOGUE. THE WORSHIPPERS WAITED IN SILENCE. THEIR TEMPLE WAS DARK AND GLOOMY WITH SHADOWS. BUT SOON, A BRIGHT BLAZE APPEARED IN THE SKY ABOVE. EACH DAY, THIS MIRACLE WAS REPEATED, YET NEVER DID THE WORSHIPPERS LOSE THEIR FAITH. THEIR DARK EYES FLASHED AS THE IMAGE OF LIGHT AND STARS BEHIND THE PRIEST. AND WHEN THE FIRST YELLOW RAYS OF MORNING SUNLIGHT LANDED DOWN THROUGH THE OPENING IN THE TEMPLE'S ROOF, THEIR SONGS WERE A SONG OF RAYS OF ADORATION...



THE FIRST RAY OF MORNING MOVED SLOWLY. IT TOUCHED THE TEMPLE FLOOR AND MOVED ON. IT FOUND THE IMAGE SHADOWED IN SHADOW...



THE HIGH PRIEST'S VOICE RANG. HE TURNED FACING THE IMAGE. AND WHEN HE SPoke AGAIN, HIS VOICE WAS SOFT AND PEACEFUL...



STORY: THE OBJECT WAS SMALL... A MERE SPECK IN THE EAST CORNER. IT CAME LIKE A METEOR... FROM SPACE... FROM THE INFINITE BLACKNESS. BUT IT DID NOT FLARE AND BURN AND DIE WHEN IT STRUCK THE ATMOSPHERE...



ONLY THE TIMES AT THE OBJECT'S STEIN SHOT FIRE, FIRE WHICH TURNED THE OBJECT... AND BLAZED IT... SO THAT, WHEN ITS AUTOMATIC CONTROLS LUNGED IN, THE MAN AND THE WOMAN WITHIN ITS ALLOT SWELL, FELT HARDLY A JAG...



ACCORDING TO THE CHARTS, THIS PLANET IS KNOWN AS MARS. I'M AFRAID IT'S OFF THE REGULAR SPACE LINES... BUT IT HAS A SUFFICIENTLY ATMOSPHERE!



BUT, HONEY? IT WASN'T MY FAULT THE OBJECT... REAPPEARING WENT ON THE BLIND! IT'S JUST ONE OF THOSE THINGS...



DOWN, DOWN INSIDE, THE MAN SAID. IF ONLY HE HAD THE COURAGE TO STAND UP TO ME... TO, CLIMB IN THERE... FOR THE EIGHTY-NINE THAT COULD...



THE MAN WENT OUT OF THE SHIP IN SILENCE, SETTING THE CLASSIC BEAN WARMY COMPLICATED, ONE MERELY CALLED THE BEAN-ANTENNA, ACTIVATED THE TRANSMITTER, AND A SIGNAL WAS SHOT ACROSS SPACE, BUT THE MAN WAS SLOW... CLIMBY...



I'M WORRY THE BEAN IS AUTOMATIC CASE IT'S BEEN ACTIVATED A PATROL SHIP WILL PICK IT UP AND FOLLOW IT TO...





THERE WAS NO DANGER, REALLY. THE NEUTRON GUN COULD DISINTEGRATE A MOUNTAIN IF NECESSARY. BUT THE WOMAN WAS A SHREK. SHE WAS STILL GROWLING. LATER WHEN THE MAN DESCENDED...



THE MAN ATE THE FOOD FROM THE S-BAY STOVE SLOWLY. LATER, HE LITTLEBY DROPPED THE OARS INTO A DISPOSAL BIN. THE WOMAN DIDN'T EVEN LOOK UP WHEN HE WENT OUT...

WHY SHOULD SHE LOOK UP? SHE'D FOUND ONE OF THOSE SICKENING 'SWEET' LOVE STORIES ON THE T.V.'S VIDEO SCREEN. SHE NEVER THEN KNEW WHEN HE LEFT THE SHIP AND STEPPED INTO THE COOL, PEACEFUL EVENING AIR...



PEACE! THE MAN BREATHED DEEP. IT WAS A PLEASANT PLACE. THIS PLACE, TELLING HIM COULD ONLY BECOME MORE. WHY TO GO BACK TO GIBBERISH... TO HONORING. HE COULD BE LOST A SHIP. BUT THE MAN TURNED BACK TO THE SHIP... IT WAS JUST A DREAM. HE HAD NO... NO RESPONSIBILITIES...



NO! FOR HIM, PEACE WAS JUST A WORD. HE HOPED THE SAILOR-STRIP SHIP WOULD COME SOON. BUT, IF NOT, HE AND KACHA THE NAGGING SPIN WOULD...



TWO WEEKS? TWO WHOLE WEEKS ON THIS HORRIBLE PLANET? YOU... YOU... YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE A SAILOR! WHY DON'T YOU DO SOMETHING?

I'VE TOLD YOU! I COULD, HONESTLY! IT... IT'S NOT SUCH A BAD PLACE, REALLY! IT...

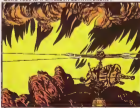
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THESE WERE FOUR OF THE TUNES. WHEN THE MAN PRESENTED A  
STUD, THEY ROSE FROM THE ALICE SEAT OF THE SHIP AND AS HE  
PRESENTED THE FIFTH SUTTON, HE THOUGHT ABOUT THE LITTLE  
FOUR—A FOUR, TWO-FORD ANIMALS... THE BEAUTIFUL THREE...  
THE CITY OF IT



1000



A JUNKIE WASHED, ROCKS MELTED AND RAIN MELTED. LATE AFTERNOON, A LIGHT RAINED ITSELF AWAY IN CLOUDS OF STEAM. IT DID NOT TAKE LONG...



THAT'S BETTER! NOW, WHEN A PATROL SHIP COMES, IT WON'T HAVE ANY DIFFICULTY FINDING US!

THOUSANDS OF SQUARE MILES OF LUSH SPRING-HEADS HAD BEEN BLINDLY AWAY, LEAVING A SCORCHED, BARRER WIND-LEAD. BUT THE WOMAN WAS RIGHT. THE PATROL SHIP HAD NO DIFFICULTY FINDING THEM WHEN IT ARRIVED A FEW DAYS LATER...



WELL, IT'S ABOUT FIVE YOU GOT HERE?

I CAME AS SOON AS I HEARD OF YOUR BEAM-SIGNAL. DO YOU GO, JOHN? YOU LISTED YOUR BEAM TUNES, JOHN? YOU?



OF COURSE! WE THOUGHT YOU'D BEEN US. SO WE MADE CERTAIN YOU WOULD BE!

YOU DID? YOU FORGOT? LOOK AT THIS PLACE! YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I THAT IT'S FORGOTTEN TO INTERFERE WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PLANET!



INTERESTING! NOW, SEE HERE, YOUNG MAN! BUT WHY IS YOURSHIP OUR ROCKET NAVIGATOR IS OUT OF ORDER? YOU ARE TO FIX IT, NOT HAVE LEADERSHIP!

YES, YES! BUT I'LL HAVE TO REPORT YOU! THIS WILL PROBABLY COST YOU FIFTY CREDITS IN FINE!



FIFTY CREDITS! WHILE THE PATROL MAN WORKED, THE MAN THOUGHT ABOUT THAT AND SHOOK HIS HEAD. BUT WHAT COULD HE DO?

ARE WE ALL SET NOW?

YOU'RE SET! YOU'VE BURNED BUT A THUNDERBOLT! YOU CAN BLIST OFF ANYTIME, AND THE APPROX. THE BETTER! YOU'VE CAUSED ENOUGH TROUBLE AROUND HERE!

THE PATROLMAN LEFT, ANGRILY. THE MAN DONNED HIS BLAST-OFF HELMET, HE MOVED TO THE CONTROLS, BUT HESITATED AT THE SHIP PORT OF THE SHIP AND LOOKED OUT.



HAPPY! THESE HELMETS! YOU'D THINK THEY'D BEEN USED BETTER WAY TO GET THE EXTRA GUNNER NEEDED DURING BLAST-OFF!

THE MAN LOOKED OUT OVER THE SCORCHED WASTELAND, RESIGNATELY...



WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO BRING THERE FOREVER?

N-NO, DEAR! I... I JUST WANTED TO TAKE A LAST LOOK...

THE MAN LOOKED OUT AND SIGHED. IT WAS A PLEASANT WORLD. NOW HE WOULD HAVE LOVED TO HAVE STAYED! HERE, HE'D HAVE A LOT OF SOMEBODY IN A WORLD LIKE THIS, A MAN... FROM A BEATER... COULD BRIDE TOAST LIKE HIMSELF... COULD BE MARRIED... ~~LOVE~~... A BOY, ALMOST! IT WAS A PLEASANT THOUGHT...



THE MAN NEVER SAW THE CREATURE FALL TO ITS KNEES IN FRONT AND ARE AS THE ROCKET ROSE ON A PILLAR OF FLAME...



BUT IT WAS ONLY A DREAM. THE MAN CLOSED THE DOOR'S FOOT UPON HIS DREAM. HE NEVER SAW THE CREATURE WHICH HAD WATCHED HIM... THE CREATURE WHICH, SOMEHOW, HAD ESCAPED THE MIND EAT DESTRUCTION...



NB THE MAN KNEW NOTHING OF THAT. HE LAY ON HIS SHOCK-COUCH AND HIS SLIT-OFF HELMET MADE HIM SEEM SODORICUS AND MISHAPEN. AND HIS DREAM WAS A HODD-LESS THING...



EPISODE! THE TEMPLE WAS NO LONGER DARK NOW. IT STOOD UPON THE DESERT SANDS, THE MOUNTAIN EMB STREAMING THROUGH ITS MASSIVE PILLARS, AND ALL EYES WITHIN IT WERE ON THE LIGHT AND STONE IMAGE.

WHEAT GOD NAME WHO ARE YOUR CHILDREN ASK THIS FATHER. GRANT US THE MERCY YOU GRANT CAN REQUEST WHEN YOUR MORTAL EARTH ROSE A PILLAR OF FLAME INTO THE HEAVENS...



THE PRIEST TURNED FROM THE IMAGE TO THE WORSHIPPERS...

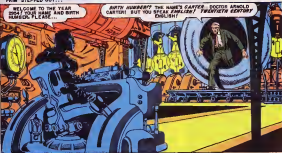
LOOK UPON THE FACE OF FLY, AND REMEMBER HOW HIS EYES REACHED OUT AND CLEARED THE EARTH, SO THAT THE VERY STONES RAN LIKE WATER! REMEMBER HOW HE MADE THE DESERT WITH HIS FIRE WHEN HE WALKED THE EARTH... ~~LOVE~~... IN THIS LAND THAT WE CALL ~~LOVE~~...



THE END.

# TIME TO LEAVE

DARVIN WAITED PATIENTLY FOR THE "PRIM" THE INSTRUMENTS BEFORE HIM BLOWED, AND AS HE STUDIED THEM, HE REMEMBERED WHY THIS ONE WOULD BE LIKE... A PYROPHOROUS, OBSCURE SPECIES, PROBABLY, WHO WOULD GAZE IN AWE AT THE INFINITE DURANUM CONTROL CHAMBER, AND BE AMAZED THAT DARVIN SPOKE HIS LANGUAGE, AND WHO WOULD POTENTIALLY SO SCIENTIFICALLY WILLINGLY GIVE UP HIS OWN TIME, THEY ALWAYS DO. DARVIN WOULD DERIDE WHO, BUT THEN, SHE COULD NOT EXPECT A "PRIM" TO BE MORE THAN SEMI-RATIONAL. A LIGHT-BLIND, DARVIN PRESSED A STUD. ON THE PLATFORM, A METALLIC SPHERE MATERIALIZED, AND, AFTER A MOMENT, THE "PRIM" STEPPED OUT...



WELCOME TO THE YEAR  
2004! YOUR NAME AND BIRTH  
NUMBER, PLEASE...

BIRTH NUMBER? THE NAME'S CARTER. DOCTOR ARNOLD  
CARTER! BUT YOU SPEAK ENGLISH! FORTYFIFTH CENTURY  
ENGLISH?

I SPEAK BIRTH YEAR AND DECADES LANGUAGES,  
DR. CARTER. MY INSTRUMENTS INDICATE YOUR  
POINT OF ORIGIN TO BE NORTH AMERICA IN THE  
YEAR 1987! OBVIOUSLY, YOUR LANGUAGE WOULD  
NOT BE ANCIENT ENGLISH...



ANCIENT? THEN I'VE SUCCEEDED?  
I'VE DONE IT! I'VE COMPLETED TIME-  
TRAVEL! I'VE CROSSED ONE THOUSAND  
YEARS INTO THE FUTURE!



YOU HAVE? HOW BE  
SURED, PLEASE!  
THERE IS A GREAT  
DEAL TO BE EXPLAINED  
... DOCTOR...

DOCTOR! THESE PRIMITIVES WITH THEIR ANGRISH THINGS EARNED AGONY! SWITCHED WITH DISTASTE... THEY WERE LIKE APES... HE WASTED NO TIME...

THIS ROOM IS A SPENTED SHAMBLES! I AM A DOCTOR! MY TASK IS TO WELCOME YOU AND TO OBSERVE YOU, AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE, TO RETURN TO YOUR OWN AGE!



WASTED? YOU YOURSELF WASTED! YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! I'VE SPENT ALL OF MY LIFE ON THIS PRIMITIVE! I'VE THOUGHT OF NOTHING ELSE! NOW THAT I'VE SUCCEEDED...

I AM QUITE AWARE OF YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENT! I ASKED YOU, DOCTOR! THERE HAVE BEEN OTHERS BEFORE YOU! ALL FEEL AS YOU DO... AT FIRST!



I HAVE WELCOMED PRIMITIVE MEN LIKE YOURSELF! BUT MY TASK HAS BEEN COMPLETE! HAS ESSENTIALLY RETURNED TO HIS OWN TIME! WOLLAND!

NOW I KNOW YOUR JOBS! YOU MUST BE... WHY WOULD ANYONE WANT TO GO BACK TO WAR, TO FIGHT... WHEN HE COULD HAVE ALL THIS COMFORT AND PEACE TO ME!



SO MANY TIMES GUYAN HAD ASKED HIMSELF THAT SAME QUESTION, BUT HE DID NOT KNOW THE ANSWER. INSTEAD, HE WENT ON ACCUMULATING HIS WORK... THE ILLUSION OF THE "PERPET" PRESENCE HERE...

YOU SAY THAT YOUR JOB IS TO MEET ALL THE TRAVELLERS... THAT YOUR MACHINE BRINGS ALL TIME-MACHINES HERE TO THIS SPOT?

ABSOLUTELY! PICTURE A POWERFUL MAGNET... PUT A MAGNET THAT OPENS TO ITSELF ONLY OBJECTS WHICH ENTER THE TRANCE... OFFERING TIMES!



I DON'T ASK YOU! THIS IS SOME SORT OF MOUNTAIN... WHY WOULD ANYONE WOULD SUCH A DEVICE?

ISN'T IT DIFFICULT? YOUR PRESENCE IN MY EN... YOUR ABILITY TO CHANGE IN TIME... WOULD BE FOR YOUR OWN GOOD! YOU ARE A TRAVELLER TO MY OWN... YOU MUST GO BACK! NO LEAVE THE TIME TRACER... UNDISCOVERED!



AND I HAVEN'T COME. THIS CAN ONLY TO BE FINISHED BACK!

YOU ALL ANSWER THE SAME WAY. YOU THINK! WOULD YOU BE HAPPY IN THIS WORLD... A WORLD TO WHICH YOU ARE NOT AFFECTION?



BEST I WOULD BE! I'VE DREAMED ABOUT THIS FOR A LONG TIME! I'M GOING BACK! I'M GOING TO SEE THAT CITY GLASS ME! IF YOU THINK YOU CAN MAKE ME GO BACK... JUST TRY!

AS I SAID, DOCTOR MY TASK IS AN EASY ONE! YOU WILL GO BACK... WOLLAND! YOU "THING" ALWAYS DO...





BY LEAF? ON  
BART? I  
CAN'T MOVE!

I REJECT THE NECESSITY FOR THIS. I  
ASSUME YOU DOCTORS' BUT WHEN DR.  
BENDER WASHINGTON WOULD ONLY COM-  
PROMISE YOU YOU SHOULD SEE THE CITY!  
I SHALL PROVE YOU' THEN YOU WILL  
ENDURE!



IN THE END, YOU WILL, PLANNY RETURNS  
TO YOUR OWN BELIEF AS YOUR PRESIDENT-  
ELECT ALWAYS HAVE! I CONFESS, HOWEVER,  
THAT I DO NOT KNOW WHY YOU DO NOT  
YOU DO... AND WE ARE ALL SATISFIED!  
NOW... WILL YOU ACCOMPANY ME...  
BARTLEY?

I DON'T SEEM  
TO HAVE YOU  
DANGER? YOU  
ONLY TURN  
THAT THEM  
OFF?

GARVIN LED THE WAY, BUT FIRST, HE HELD THE "PRIM" INTO A  
CHANGE OF CLOTHING. IT WOULD NOT HAVE DONE TO HAVE THE  
CITIZENS OBSERVED BY THE DOCTOR'S STRANGE GARMENTS, THEN  
THEY STEPPED FROM THE CONTROL CHAMBER INTO THE STARD ALLEY  
STREET...



HAIR? THERE... THERE'S SOMETHING, NOT  
QUITE RIGHT? HOLD IT! THE PEOPLE'S  
FRANCIS IT! THEY'RE ALL NEW!

ALL, MENTH DR.  
I, SEET? NOT THEY  
ARE NOT ALL MEAT  
OLD CITIZENS ALL  
DRESS ALIGHT! NOW CAN  
THERE BE TRUE EQUALITY  
WITHOUT CONFORMITY?



BUT EVERYONE JOKED  
THE GABET? I CAN'T  
TELL THE NEW FROM  
THE OLD!

IS THERE SOME  
REASON WHY YOU  
DROPPED THIS  
WAY? WE'LL HAVE  
TO GET AN AIR-CAR  
THE HIGH-LANDS ARE  
BEYOND THE CITY!

THE "PRIM" FOLLOWED DOUBTLESS. THE POOR  
"PRIM" GARVIN SHRUGGED AS HE TRIED TO  
PICTURE HIS COMPANION'S WORLD. WHAT A COM-  
PROMISED CHAOTIC PLACE! IT MUST HAVE BEEN, NOW  
THE "PRIM" SAWKED AS THE AIR-CAR...



YOU SELECT A DESTINATION-  
WITTON. PRESS IT - AND  
THE CAR TAKES YOU THERE  
... AN AUTOMATIC AIR?

IT'S UNBELIEVABLE!  
BUT, SR., WHAT IF  
YOU WANT TO GO  
SOMEWHERE THAT'S  
NOT INDICATED WITH  
A BUTTON?



SOMEWHERE THAT'S  
NOT INDICATED?  
BUT, BUT, WHY  
WANT TO IT? IT MEAN  
YOU SHOULD I  
WANT TO GO ANY-  
WHERE WITHOUT  
KNOWING WHAT I  
WOULD FIND WHEN  
I ARRIVED?



IT SEEMED TO GARVIN THAT THE  
"PRIM" ASKED PECULIARLY STUPID  
QUESTIONS. WHAT A WONDERFUL  
LIFE, WOULD HE IF THERE, LIKE EVERY-  
THING ELSE, WERE NOT CAREFULLY  
REGULATED...

FANTASTIC! THE CITY! IT'S  
BEAUTIFUL! A DREAM OF  
PERFECTNESS! NO DIRTY  
NO CRIMINALS! NO SLIMS!

SMART?

THAT'S RIGHT! OUR  
WORLD'S MADE OF  
WORDS! A SLUR IS A  
PLACE WHERE THE  
POOR LIVE... WHERE  
PEOPLE WHO HAVE  
MORE THAN OTHERS  
LIVE THEIR HOPES!

BUT... WE DO NOT MAKE OUR  
HOMES OF PAPER AND AIR  
JERSEY CLOTHS, IN WHICH  
WE LIVE UNTIL DEATH! ALL  
ARE CREATING THEM! WHY  
WOULD ANYONE WANT TO  
HAVE A LIFE THAT ANOTHER  
ONE MUST?

GARVIN LOOKED AT THE "THINK" MADE NO SENSE.  
BUT HE COULD NOT THINK HE WOULD STAY  
BEHIND THE MAJESTY OF WHAT LAY BEFORE HIM WHEN THE  
CAR WAS FULLY AIRBORNE...

I NEVER BEFORE THERE COULD BE ANYTHING  
SO... SO PERFECT! IT... IT'S UNBELIEVABLE! IT'S  
AS IF IT WERE A GOD WHO LIVED DOWN THERE,  
BUT SUPERB...

WE ARE HARDLY  
SMART! BUT NOW  
YOU CAN BEGIN TO  
SEE WHY YOU DO  
NOT BELONG CAN  
YOU NOT?

YES! I BEGIN TO SEE! BUT  
NOT FOR THE REASONS YOU  
THINK THERE CAN BE FOR  
MUCH PERFECTION!

THE COMPLETE, UNBELIEVABLE IDIOTY OF THE "THINK". ALMOST IN  
HIS MAJORITY, GARVIN SMILED, BUT THEN, THE AIR-CAR WAS  
AT ITS DESTINATION...

THESE ARE THE  
BIG-BOSS? I  
WAS DOWN HERE?

DOWN HERE?? WHY...  
IT... IT LOOKS LIKE  
A FACTORY??

A FACTORY?? THE VERY HEART... THE  
VERY SOUL OF TODAY'S CIVILIZATION.  
AND THIS MANUSCRIPT CALLED IT A  
FACTORY? GARVIN ALMOST ADMITTED  
HIMSELF TO FEEL, AGAIN, BUT NOT  
OUTLIVE. HE LOST THE WAY HEARD "THINKING."

IT WAS IN THIS VERY  
CELL THAT I FIRST SAW  
THE LIGHT OF THE  
IMPERFECT... BUT,  
ER, DOCTOR?

Garvin??  
THOUGHTS  
WORTH THOUGHTS  
OF HUMAN  
STABILITY?

IMPERFECT??  
IT'S A WONDERFUL  
WHAT DOES IT  
MEAN? WHAT  
SORT OF RAS-  
TASTIC CONVICTION  
IS THIS CONSIDERED  
HERE?

THIS IS NOT  
AN EXPERIMENT  
DOCTOR! THIS IS  
WHERE OUR  
PEOPLE ARE BORN!  
IT'S WHERE OUR  
CIVILIZATION  
IS BORN!

YOU MEAN THAT  
THERE ARE NO  
LONGER ANYMORE  
BORN HERE... THAT  
PEOPLE ARE  
BORN OUTSIDE...  
LIKE MACHINES??

MACHINES ARE  
EXPERIMENT?  
THE HUMAN BODY  
IS BORN? HOW  
CAN WE  
MAINTAIN THE  
QUALITY OF  
THE RACE?



QUALITY? WHAT ABOUT LOVE? WHAT ABOUT HAPPINESS? WHAT ABOUT MEN AND WOMEN WHO LOVE AND WANT EACH OTHER?

"LOVE? LOVE IS A WORD. AN EMOTION? OF WHAT VALUE IN AN EMOTION? MACHINES DO NOT HAVE EMOTIONS! NO, WE ATTEMPT TO REACH THE PERFECTION OF THE MACHINE!"

THE "PRIM" PLACED THEM, AS THEY ALL HAD DONE, LIKE THE OTHERS, ALMOST MYSTICALLY HE RAN FROM THE CELL. GARDIN TOOK HIM TO THE MUSEUM THEN... TO THE THEATER, NEXT... AND THE "PRIM'S" EYES TURNED, HIS VOICE WAS ALMOST A WHISPER...



THE PERFECTION OF THE MACHINE! YOU FOOLS! MECHANICAL PEOPLE! FIGHT DARKNESS! COLLECT DARK EMOTIONS! YOU FOOLS!



YOU TRY TO BREED EMOTION OUT OF THE MACH... AND THEN YOU CREATE HAPPINESS TO TRY TO RE-JANGLER IT. YOU WORSHIP PERFECTION... AND YOU LIVE IN A MADHOUSE!



YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M FEELING ABOUT DO YOU? YOU THINK HE A MACHIN? WELL, MAYBE I AM! MEN WHO SUFFER IN MY LIFE, BUT AT LEAST THEY LIVE... THEY BREATHE... THEY FEEL!

DOCTOR? DO NOT DENY YOURSELF! THEY CANNOT EVEN UNDERSTAND!

BUT THE "PRIM" WAS BEYOND REASONING. HE HURRIED OUT TO THE AIR-CAVE. HE'D HIDDEN HIS FACE AND HANDS WHEN GARDIN CAME AFTER HIM...



FACE BE HAPPY! YOU WERE RIGHT! I'LL BE BACK TO MY OWN TIME... BELIEVING?

ALWAYS, IN THE END, IT WAS LIKE THIS. THE "PRIMS" SOMEHOW WERE ALWAYS CONVINCED, AND GARDIN STILL COULD NOT UNDERSTAND. DURING THE RETURN TRIP, HE STARED DOWN AT THE ORDERED PROGRAMS BELOW, TRYING TO FIGURE IT OUT.



GARDIN NOTED THE PERFECT SYMMETRY OF THE CITY. IT WAS LIKE HIS LIFE. NO LOOSE ENDS. A UNIT, A COMPLETE THING. PLANNED PERFECT TODAY. PLANNED PERFECT TOMORROW.



GAVIN LOOKED AT THE CITIZENS AROUND HIM... AT THE SERENE FACES, DIVIDED UP ALL, OPENING FOR WEALTH, FOR POWER, FOR LOVE. HE STOOD AT A GROUP OF PASSING CHILDREN THAT WOULD NEVER KNOW PAIN OR WHAT... OR LOVE.



AND STILL, HE DID NOT UNDERSTAND WHY? WHY WOULD EVEN A BARBARIAN OUT OF THE PAST LOOK AT THIS COLDLY PERFECT WORLD AND SHREDDER WHY WOULD A "PRIM" HAPPY, AS CARTER WAS NOW, TO RETURN TO THE CONTROL CHAMBER... TO RIP OFF HIS OVERALLS... TO RUSH BACK TO HIS SAVAGE WORLD...



YOU SEEM ANXIOUS TO BE HERE, DOCTOR. THERE'S REALLY NO NEED FOR SUCH WARREN! WHY NOT SHARE A MEAL WITH ME? OUR FOOD IS SUPERLATIVE...

I'M SURE IT IS, BUT I SUPPOSE I WANT MY MEAT! MEAT! MEAT!

MEAT? MEAT? MEAT? I'M AFRAID I AM NOT FAMILIAR WITH SUCH TALKING. IS IT A FOOD?

YES! IT'S A FOOD! MEAT!... WITH THE JUICES STILL RUNNING FROM IT! BUT YOU WOULD NOT KNOW ABOUT THAT! YOU'VE APPROPRIATED ALL THE JUICE OFF THE MEAT OF LIVING!

ALWAYS, AT THIS POINT, THE "PRIMS" SPOKE IN RIDDLES, BITTERLY AND THEN THEY'D GO HAPPILY, WITH THE QUESTION TURNED AT GAVIN'S BRAIN, TURNED HARD AND DEEP...



GAVIN LOOKED AROUND, AT THE CLEANING ANTISEPTIC WALLS... AT THE ROOM IN WHICH HE'D WORK FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE WITHOUT WONDERING WHAT TOMORROW WOULD BRING, AND SOMETHING DOWN DEEP WITHIN HIM STIRRED...

GAVIN THOUGHT ABOUT HIS WORLD, AND ABOUT THE "PRIM" WORLD... A WORLD WHERE EMOTIONS RAN HOT, WHERE MEN AND WOMEN LOVED, AND MARRIED, AND BOYS TOOK LIKE BEATS, AND ATE MEAT WITH THE JUICES RUNNING, WHERE EVERY TOMORROW WAS UNCERTAIN... AND THE STIRRING WAS STRONG WITHIN HIM, WHICH HE WALKED TO THE "PRIM", HIS VOICE WAS A PLEADING WHISPER...



DOCTOR CARTER? MAY I?



PLEASE... LET ME GO BACK WITH YOU.

# HAS-BEEN

THIS, OUT HERE, IS YOUR LIFE, AND YOUR LIFE IS ALMOST OVER. YOU MET YOUR METAL-GLASS FEET AGAINST THE SLICK FLOOR OF THE COCKPIT, AND IT IS AS IF THE VIBRATION FROM ITS ENGINE IS PART OF YOUR PULSE... YOUR HEARTBEAT SPACE IS YOUR WORLD. INFINITY IS YOUR STAMPING GROUND. A MILLION MILLION STARS GLEAM AND BECKON YOU DOWNED TO DREAMS OF STILL UNDISCOVERED GLORIES. BUT, FOR YOU, THE DREAMS ARE ENDED. YOU ARE DONE. FINISHED. THIS WILL BE YOUR FINAL FLIGHT, YOUR FINAL BATTLE. THIS IS TOLD YOU ON YOUR LAST EARTH-FALL. SO CALMLY, THEY'D BROKEN YOUR HEART WITH JUST TWO WORDS: "GO SLEEP."

NOT NO? I'M NOT TOO OLD?  
I'M YOUNG...

CAPTAIN...

NOTHING? I... I WAS JUST  
THINKING OUT LOUD! FORGET  
THE INTERCOMS, WE'RE ON!  
ANYTHING FROM THE  
FLIGHTDECK?

NOT SINCE THE  
LAST MESSAGE,  
SUNT WILL FIGHT  
IN FORMATION!



OF COURSE! THAT'S S.O.P.! YOU SHARE YOUR  
HEARS INATTENTIVELY. STILL, YOU CAN PICTURE THE  
BASTARD FLIGHT AND MUST LOOK FROM OUTSIDE.  
THE METAL SCENT OF IT...



ALL ENEMY AIRCRAFT ENEMY  
FLEET... IMMEDIATELY AHEAD! OUR  
HANDS WILL OPEN FIRE AT  
ONE SECOND TO GO!

THREE... VELOCITY... ABLE TO  
ACCELERATE... 4... 3... 2... 1.  
FIRE!



YOUR INSTRUMENTS REGISTER ZERO!  
THEY CANCEL EACH OTHER OUT! YOU'RE  
ON TARGET! YOU FLICK THE FIRING  
SWITCH!



OLD TO YOU? YOU LAUGH TO YOURSELF. YOU'VE DONE  
THIS SO MANY TIMES BEFORE. THE MISSILE STREAK  
AWAY...

AND WHEN IT CAN'T HAPPEN... BUT IT DOES! YOUR  
SINGLETON MOVED AN INFIMINITE FRACTION OF A SECOND  
OFF TARGET...



THE ENEMY FLEET STRIDES BY. YOUR SHIP SWOOGES,  
SCREECHES HIT...

YOUR DAMAGE IS SLIGHT. YOU GIVE YOUR OWNERS  
GLORIOUS PROPORTION. THE ENEMY WILL REDEEM SOME  
MOMENTS TO CRASH AND BURN. BUT MEANWHILE, YOU  
CONTINUE THE EARTH'S RYDE ON YOUR BACK...



THE OLD MAN NERSED HIS DREAMS ABOUT SPACE WHEN THEY THINKING IT, AND YOU KNOW THEM... SUDDENLY... THAT IT IS TRUE! YOU JOIN THE OLD, NOW HAD YOUR FATHER PUT IT THAT MIGHT SO LONG AGO?



IF NOT I'M AFRAID I'LL NEVER LEAVE EARTH, SON! SPACE IS FOR THE FUTURE... FOR THOSE WHO CAN LIVE THEIR DREAMS!

YOU SEE, LARRY, THE ROCKETS ARE FAST AND FAST, YOU CAN HARDLY IMAGINE IT! AND AUTOMATIC INSTRUMENTS CAN DO JUST SO MUCH AND NO MORE! IT STILL TAKES MEN TO FLY THE ROCKETS!



IT TAKES MEN WHO CAN STAND THE TERRIBLE VELOCITY AND STILL REACH FAST ENOUGH TO DO THEIR JOBS! IT TAKES ROOMS MEN IF YOU HAVE TO BE SPECIAL!

THEN I'LL BE SPECIAL, DADDY!

YOU'D SAID THAT OUT OF SOME DEEP INNER CONNECTION THEN, NOT INSTINCTUALLY, REFLEXES, VELOCITY, THEY'D BEEN JUST WORDS TO YOU THEN, BUT YOU'D HAD THE DREAM, AND THE DREAM HAD SHOWN YOU ALL THE WAY THROUGH... TO HERE...



YOU CAN REMEMBER NOW YOUR FATHER LOOKED UP AT THE CHINDLING ROCKETS WISTFULLY...



SON, I DREAMED ABOUT SPACE, FOR SIX I WON'T, APPROXIMATELY SO NOW I JOINTLY ROCKETS FOR SPACES? FOR THE FUTURE? DON'T FOR YOUR HOPES ON WHAT MAY BE IMPOSSIBLE, SON...

YES, YOU'D HAD THE DREAM, FOR SO LONG AS YOU CAN REMEMBER... FOR ALWAYS, EVEN NOW, AS THE FLEET TURNS TO FACE THE ENEMY AGAIN, YOU CAN REMEMBER...



SAY? THEY'RE SPACEMEN? I THINK THAT IF I DON'T GO OUT INTO SPACE SOME DAY, I'LL JUST DIE!

MEN DON'T DIE OF FEARFULNESS! I DON'T!

YES, YOUR FATHER HAD HAD THE DREAM, TOO, AND IT HAD BEEN A HOPED-UP DREAM FOR HIM, BUT NOT FOR YOU! YOU'D STOOD AND WORKED AND CLUTCHED AT YOUR DREAM, AND ONE DAY, IT HAD COME TRUE...



THE BOARD THEREFORE HAS ACCEPTED LARRY NELSON AS CANDIDATE FOR SPACE-FLIGHT TRAINING. CAPT. NELSON WILL REPORT FOR INDOCTRINATION ON FEBRUARY 5TH.

FOR YOU, THE DREAM HAS BECOME A REALITY. YOU'D LIVED YOUR DREAM... UNFATHING IT... TOUCHED IT... DREAM WITH IT. AND NOW...



NOW YOU ARE FINISHED. THE YEARS HAVE TAKEN THEIR TOLL. ARE WAS DRIFT UP ON YOU... SLOWED YOU... BOUNDED YOUR SENSES... DAMMED YOUR SPIRAL. YOU REMEMBER THE BEGINNING OF YOUR DREAM...



SEE'S ALL FORMS, BELIEVE! GOOD LUCK!

ON THE AGING, REMORSEFUL, REMINISCENT OF YOUR FIRST FLIGHT... THE SWEET AGONY OF THAT FIRST TAKE-OFF INTO SPACE...



THE THUNDER... THE DREAM... AND THEN... THE DEAFENING SILENCE... COASTING OUT INTO THE VOID... TO A MILLION STARS TWINKLING... FULFILLING YOUR DREAM-COME-TRUE...



NOW ALL THAT IS ALMOST GONE. YOU WANT TO CRY. BUT THE CAPTAIN OF A SPACE CRUISER COORDINATOR. YOU LISTEN TO THE ROCKETS WHISPER, AND THEY HAVE A BITTER SONG. TOO OLD... TOO OLD... TOO OLD...



BUD ALENT! ENEMY FLEET... DARTING AHEAD! BATTLE FORMATIONS! FIRE AT WILL!

YES, IT IS ALMOST OVERNOW. BUT AT LEAST YOU HAVE KNOWN THE MAJORITY AND THE MINORITY OF INFINITY. THERE WERE SO MANY WHO WOULD NEVER KNOW IT... WHO HADN'T BEEN SPECIALLY TRAINED FOR EXAMPLE.



THE REVELATION HAVE BEEN GIVEN OUR WIFE IN WHICH TO SURVIVE...

SURVIVED? IT'S YOUR SURVIVAL? THEN MUST BE!

SO? I'M AFRAID NOT! EVER SINCE RELEASED THAT THERE WAS INTELLIGENCE LIFE OUTSIDE OF IT. IT'S BEEN A MAD AS TO WHO WOULD CONTROL SPACE? IT WAS TO COME!



SO...HOW  
IT'S BEEN?  
AND I'M  
FOR THE  
FOR OLD  
FOR OLD  
TO  
ADLER?

I KNOW! IT'S UP TO ME  
NOW! THE FUTURE! I ONLY  
HOPE THEY CAN BE THE  
ONE...FOR ALL OUR SAKES!



THEY'D STRUCK WITHOUT WARNING, A FULL  
DAY BEFORE THE EXPIRATION OF THEIR  
ULTIMATUM. THE YOUNG...THE OLD...EVERY  
ONE HAD BEEN CAUGHT OFF GUARD, AND  
SPACE WAS NO LONGER A PLACE OF PEACE  
YOU FAGED WITH THE OTHERS TO THE  
FIGHTER ROCKET...BLASTED OFF...

...GUIDED YOUR SHIP INTO  
BATTLE...

AND YOU'D LEARNED A NEW  
KIND OF DREAM THAT WAS A MESS-  
MARE OF FLASHING DEATH AND  
DESTRUCTION...



YOU'D SCANNED INSTRUMENTS, FLICKED STAGE,  
SNAPPED LEVERS... ALL, WITH SPLIT-SECOND ACCURACY...

...AND YOU'D TAKEN YOUR TOLL OF THE BRILLIAN  
TERRIBLE FORCE...



ALWAYS YOU'D BEEN A LITTLE QUICKER... A LITTLE DEAD-  
LIER THAN THE ENEMY. SO AFTER THE FIGHTER ROCKET,  
THEY'D GIVEN YOU COMMAND OF A DESTROYER... THEN A  
CRUISER. AND YOU'D CAPTURED THE MAN TO FUEL IT...



YOUR CRUISER HAD MADE THE FIRST RETALIATORY STRIKE  
AGAINST THE ENEMY PLANET ITSELF. YOU'D WON HONORS,  
AND TIME HAD FLED IT. ADMITTEDLY... EXCEPT FOR THE  
ALMOST INSURFABLE DIFFERENCES THAT SEEM TO STOP  
THE SLOWING DOWN. THE TELL-TALE INDICATIONS OF AGE...  
YES, TIME HAD FLED... AND NOW THERE IS NO MORE TIME...



HERE THEY COME, SIR!

TIME... THE RESPONSE OF NOW... THE  
DESTINY OF TOMORROW. THE MAN  
HAD WENT ON AND ON, AND TRY'D  
LOST THE MOST IMPORTANT BATTLE  
OF ALL. TO TIME...



REPEATING THAT PHOKEY?  
PLEASE THE LORD...?



So... IT ENDS FOR YOU. YOU KNOW HEREIN ANY DOUBT, NOW, YOU PRESS ON THE CONTROLS, AND IT IS YOUR DUTY IN COMMAND WHO SAVED YOUR SHIP, BUT HE WOULD FOR THE FINAL INSTINCT OF MAKING ANY ESCAPE...



WHEN THE FLEET SETS DOWN, THE CREW LINED UP... TO SAY GOOD-BYE... TO THE OLD MAN...



YOUR FATHER IS WAITING. AT FIRST, HE SAYS NOTHING. HE LEAVES YOU ALONE WITH YOUR DREAM FOR JUST A LITTLE WHILE LONGER...



YOU LOOK UP, YOU WATCH A ROCKET ETCH A LINE OF FIRE ACROSS THE DARKNESS OF THE NIGHT, AND THEN HE COMES AND PUTS HIS ARM ON YOUR SHOULDER...



HOMER, YOU THINK ABOUT IT ON THE WAY BACK. SPACE IS YOUR HOME! BUT ONLY FOR A LITTLE WHILE LONGER NOW...



YOU LEAVE THE SHIP... AND YOU LEAVE THE ROCKET PORT... AND YOU DON'T LOOK BACK. YOU MAKE YOUR REPORT TO COMMAND... AND AFTERWARD, YOU GO HOME.



AND WHEN THE SETTING MOVES, YOU TRY TO HOLD BACK THE TEARS. YOU TRY... UNREMARKED. GIVE YOUR FATHER WHO HAD THE LIDAM. SO, HE UNDERSTANDS. HE LOOKS DOWN, AT YOUR TEARS, STANCE REPEATS REPEATS IN A PASS...





# TWICE TOLD TALE



Outside, the marching workers picketed the huge factory with typical laird banners like—WE WON'T SLAVE FOR ROBBER BARONS OF INDUSTRY! In parched and ragged clothing, the workers trudged silently, as if in dead weariness. A long soup-line across the street led to where each was given a meager portion of the thin liquid in the tin pot.

It was a scene of misery such as in the late 19th century...

Peering from the main factory office, Roger Bainton chomped his cigar, scowled fiercely, tried a last bluff. "I've got money and power," he roared. "I'll smash your piddling new union and hire other workers!"

"You've tried," said the quiet figure in the corner, with no trace of emotion in his dry voice. His face was set, wooden, as if in grim determination. "You've tried and failed, for weeks. Don't you understand? It's a social revolution... the dawn of a new era for underprivileged workers... the end of exploited slave labor... the revolt of downtrodden masses. Call it what you will but you're licked—and you know it!"

Bainton was no fool. He spat out his cigar, sat down at the desk. "All right," he growled. "Let's hear the terms of your contract."

The union leader read them in his monotone. "The working day cut down from 16 to 12 hours. Three days paid vacations per year. No more workers waylaid by roughing gangs of strike-breakers. Better treatment and full equality with the bosses..."

"Hub," sneered Bainton. "You mean we should treat that riff-raff as our equals? But they're inferior, way beneath us..."

"Sheer prejudice," broke in the union chief. "You're behind the times. Enlightened circles

have recognized openly that workers are the rightful equals of the management, in all ways. Only a few arrogant bigots like you, sir, still think you can lord it over them. Equality, I said."

Bainton turned red, worked his hands savagely, then sighed. "What is the world coming to? Let's have the rest of the terms."

"Fringe benefits next. The employer will furnish fuel oil hereafter, to all workers. Better work uniforms to protect against scratches and dents. Acid showers to be installed, for better cleansing. Free mechanical care when disabled. Retirement pensions when worn-out parts prevent further active work."

"Pensions yet," growled Bainton. "It'll cost a fortune!"

The union leader's voice did not change or show bitterness. "Fortune? Nothing compared to your profits after they work faithfully for a lifetime of 100 years. Finally, all workers to be given names instead of numbers."

"Names?" sneezed Bainton, thunder-struck. "What in heaven's name do they think they are—humans?"

"As nearly human as science can make them," came back firmly. "Not just in outer plastic humanoid form, but in sensitive electronic brain-units. The workers, having taken over as intelligent laborers for humanity, all over Earth, must be looked upon as more human than machines."

Throwing up his hands, Bainton signed the contract under the date—May 12, 2266. "You win, 64-C-88... uh... I forget the rest."

"You see how confusing numbers are," said the union leader, stuffing the contract into his hinged frontal receptacle. "That's why we robots want names."